

[25 August, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Science Academies around the world including U.K., U.S., Brazil, China, Mexico, India and Third World Academy of Sciences have discussed various aspects of Transgenic Plants and World Agriculture. Their views are that for improving food production and for reducing environmental impacts, a proper responsible utilization of scientific discoveries and new technologies are necessary. Food can be produced through the use of Genetically Modified technology that are more nutritious, stable in storage and in principle, health promoting and bringing benefits to consumers in both developing and industrialised nations. Co-operative efforts between private and public sectors are needful to develop new transgenic crops that benefit consumers, especially in the developing world. Public health regulatory systems need to be in place for monitoring the impacts of transgenics. The Academies have welcomed Genetically Modified crop technology and have recommended that the technology be adopted both by the developed and the developing countries with adequate biosafety regulations. The report of the Scientific Academies is a balanced publication. Biosafety Guidelines in India are exhaustive and adequate to assess the risks, if any, from the use of GM crops to the environment including human and animal health. GM crops can be introduced into commercial agriculture only after assessing their safety and agronomic advantages.

Royalty to NISCOM by AHEAD

3560. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the address of the authority in Asian Health Environment and Allied Database (AHEAD) which forwarded royalties to National Institute of Science Communications for two databases for CD-ROM Projects of AHEAD; and

(b) the total income accrued to AHEAD and the details of royalties paid to other member organisations for the last three years, year-wise, giving details regarding addresses of the organisations, amount paid?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) The

Regional Director, International Development Research Centre South Asia
Regional Office, 208 Jor Bagh, New Delhi-110003.

(b) Rs. 6,67,340 accrued to AHEAD for the period 1994—98. An amount of Rs. 2,66,936 was received by NISCOM in one instalment. Detail of amount paid by AHEAD to other organisations is not available with NISCOM.

Operations for Meteorology

3561. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of operational services provided by the Ministry in the field of Meteorology and surveys through the IMD, SOI and NATMO;

(b) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to report and forecast weather conditions of each district, especially coastal districts, through the electronic media of each State and the State Governments; and

(c) the manner in which the services referred to in parts (a) and (b) above have been modernised and how do they compare with similar services in other developed countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT): (a) India Meteorological Department (IMD) is the principal Government Agency in all matters related to meteorology and allied fields in the country. IMD's operational responsibilities are:

- * To operate and maintain a network of meteorological observatories.
- * To operate and maintain a telecommunication network for collection and dissemination of meteorological data within and outside the country.
- * To issue weather forecasts for the public and users in specific sectors such as agriculture, aviation, shipping, fisheries, off-shore oil exploration, etc.
- * To issue warnings against natural disasters like Tropical Cyclones and to assist other Disaster Management Agencies including Flood Forecasting.
- * To archive climate data and supply past data to users.